/132 cont'd/

755 In the evening we went to watch the Hsiao people in Yen-sheng village perform Tso p'ing an, a ritual asking help of a god because of sickness. The name of the god was Fu Lao Ye. His image was [582] carved on wood and seated in a tiny wooden sedan. During the sacred service, two Taoist priests, who were accompanying the wooden god, performed different duties: one recited incantations, and the other performed a series of acts, representing the god's directions to the sick person. As I watched, I suspected that this kind of practice was undoubtedly introduced by the Chinese; a highly symbolic god could not possible have originated in such a primitive culture as the Hsiao's.

754 During a conversation late at night, Mr. Wang Chao-i described in detail the two ways of carrying out black magic that the Li people use, the chin mu and ta fu t'ou, which were really frightening and hair-raising even for us to listen to.

Second month, twenty-fourth day. (Wednesday)

621 At ten o'clock in the morning, accompanied by Chiang Ying-liang and Ho Yüan-chiung, we started fro Chih-pao village. We arrived at the place in about an hour. Most of the villagers were out fishing, and only three old men were left to watch the village gate. Headman Teng Te-ch'un, who seemed to be about 60 years old, was refined in appearance. We were told that there were about 30 families with about 300 members, averaging ten members in each family, and that he had two sons and eight grandsons. He probably 163 exaggerated somewhat, but it is undoubtedly true that the birth rate 171 among the Miao is higher than among the Li, and because of their more sanitary habits the death rate is also lower. We found in his 165 home numerous written records; most were such things as pictures of gods, almanacs, and the Taoist canons. Since we had no time 622 to copy them, we only borrowed one copy and brought it back with 217 us. Headman Teng killed chickens to treat us, and we could not resist his hospitality and stayed for the meal. The meal was cleaner and more eatable than one prepared by the Li would have been.

4:Mickey E-5 (1940-?)1947 AE5 Miao AE5

755 Always when the trouble was internal they called in the shamaness to go through her ritual and discover the cause of the trouble and the method to use to combat it. Of course they consulted her for other troubles, too, and on rare occasions asked a priest to perform a similar ritual.

757 123 One day I discovered that the young man in House 31 had a bad foot. I made him put it in hot water and put on salve. During the day a big carbuncle under his big toe came to a head, broke, and began to exude pus nicely. I left him with a rag around it, and he later went to sleep. They gave me a good breakfast with turnips in the soup.

At the funeral of the oldest inhabitant I found myself holding a sort of clinic after each feast — treatment for sore eyes, various kinds of sores and boils, and a teething baby whose stomach was upset. I had a great many calls in the village for eye drops to help sore eyes and trachoma, by even an old lady who was going blind. I had almost as many calls for salves to put on skin troubles, which were a great affliction to them. It was not safe to prescribe for more serious complaints lest they blame me when the patient died. However, the use of simple remedies was an excellent way to make friends, as I learned when I gave the poor little baby of one of the priests cod liver oil and the child began to pick up. Even tiny babies had big boils on the shoulder or foot.

164 Each summer while I was in the *hsien* there were epidemics of dysentery in the *hsien* city, brought by travelers — refugees and soldiers, chiefly — and this was then carried to the villages. One summer the whole family in which I was staying had the complaint. The second son of the old man's son died of it. The previous summer the first son and a girl baby in a nearby household had died of it, also. It once developed into meningitis and death resulted in a day or two. The only other cause of death among children which I knew of personally was malnutrition. In that case the mother of a baby who had just died, and whose breasts were painfully full, promised me to feed the other child, but never did so.

165 Four other deaths in the village during the period were all of old or elderly men and

4:Mickey E-5 (1940-?) 1947 AE5 Miao AE5

women. One man of fifty-odd died from the kick of a cow, one of nearly seventy of heart trouble. Two old women of eighty-four and seventy-six died of old age. There were at least thirteen births in the period. This would have resulted in a slight increase in population had there not been families who moved to other villages.

Priests. The day that the wife of Cheng-hsiang was in labor for her second son, the old man who lived in the other part of their house and who was a head carpenter and a maker of bamboo articles such as scoops and baskets, set a bowl of rice grains with three lighted incense sticks in it on a bench and a bowl of wine on the floor in front of it. Then, holding a small chicken in his left hand, he chanted in Miao, cast lots with four pieces of bamboo, spilled out some of the wine, and then cast lots again. Finally he spilled all of the wine, took up the bowl of rice, and the bamboo pieces and went away. This was done in the room outside of the one in which she was confined, and the priest faced her door as he went through the ritual.

On that same day I saw the oldest and most proficient priest in the village squatting before a tripod of bamboo branches, behind and facing the corner of that house. Before him were a bowl of rice and one of wine. As he chanted he cast lots with pieces of bamboo. A boy from the house before which he was chanting brought him a piece of smoked pork in a loop of straw, a small bundle of straw, and a cleaver. He cut off a piece of the meat and put it on the burning straw, after which he spilled some of the wine on the ground.

Twice I saw this man with two younger men going solemnly from house to house. The first time the older man carried a bowl of rice, one of the others a gong, and the third a long staff of bamboo with colored paper streamers and leaves at the top, and a bag with rice in it. The man who carried the gong struck it as they went from one house to the next. At each house the older man entered and set his bowl of rice on a stool or bench, then, facing the door, chanted. The man with the staff and rice bag set the former down beside the door and both younger men went in. In each house they gave them a small measure of rice for the bag. The second time

8: Graham E-5 (1921-1936) 1937 AE5 Miao AE5

755 The Ch'uan Miao have no so-called doctors but there are some people who are supposed to know more about healing than others. They use mutton, pork, fish, the flesh of hawks or dogs, grasses, roots, bones of leopards, tigers and bears, and fossil bones and teeth. Neolithic stone axes, when found, are ground to powder and used as medicine. Fish is used to heal many diseases, pork to heal colds, dog meat to heal rheumatism, mutton to heal stomach trouble, and there is a kind of grass that is supposed to heal broken bones. This grass is wrapped around the broken limb which is bound up tightly until the bone has grown together. A few of these medicines have healing power, but others are positively harmful.

753 755 All diseases are supposed to be caused by demons. These creatures are the unhappy souls of human beings, animals and some inanimate things such as mountains and stones. The soul of a human being may become a demon if there are no descendants to provide for its needs or if the descendants are unfilial, do not show due reverence, and do not provide through offerings the necessary food, money, clothing, etc. Naturally the way to heal a disease is to get rid of the demon that is causing it and this is the work of the *tuan kung*. He knows how to find out what demon is causing the trouble and by means of charms, ceremonies and incantations he exorcises the demon and heals the disease. Of course he is paid for his services.

164 165 With such meager and inadequate provision for the healing of the sick it is not at all strange that the death-rate among the Ch'uan Miao is very high. A Ch'uan Miao friend told me that eleven children had been born to him and that only two were still living, both of whom were less than ten years old.[13] He said that he believed that many deaths were caused by the use of the wrong medicines. It is evident that if the birth-rate were not correspondingly high the Ch'uan Miao would gradually disappear. Malaria, typhoid, and tuberculosis probably cause more deaths than other diseases.

762 A great many Ch'uan Miao women commit suicide, and it seems almost fashionable for them to take their own lives. The reasons are: first, that the husband and the husband's parents mistreat the wife; second, that her husband is unfaithful; and third, that she is grieved because of the death of her children.

763 When a person dies, people are afraid as long as the corpse is in the house, because they believe that the soul of the dead person may do harm to the living.

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13. Since this was written, one of these two children and the father have died.

10: Graham E-5 (1921-?) 1954 AE5 Miao AE5

engagement is made. There is generally no love between the bride and the groom unless it is after marriage. Love affairs, which are many, are often between a man and another man's wife or between a woman and another woman's husband. Sometimes lovers run away together, after which go-betweens endeavor to obtain the consent of the bride's parents, and the gift to her parents must be made as usual. Marriage by capture is not unknown. Strange to say, women rather like this method, for it shows that the man loves or esteems the woman, and it often results in a happy marriage.

There are no physicians, although some persons are reputed to know more about medicines and healing than others, and the efficacy of the medicines has not yet been scientifically investigated. The common belief is that all diseases and other calamities are caused by demons, which must be exorcised by the *do nun* or *tuan kung*, who is a magician or shaman. He has a formula for every disease, and besides using ceremonies and incantations to exorcise the demons that cause diseases or other calamities, he performs many real wonders, among which are treading with bare feet on a red-hot plowshare and touching his tongue to the same, spitting or spurting hot oil out of his mouth onto a fire to cause a larger blaze, and with bare feet walking over a ladder of sharp swords. It is not strange that the death rate among the Ch'uan Miao is very high.

The Ch'uan Miao theory of filial piety and of the relation of mutual helpfulness between the deceased ancestors and their descendants corresponds fairly closely to that of the Chinese. The deceased ancestors are believed to be in need of the same things that they need on this earth before death, such as food, clothing, houses, and money, and these are provided by the loyal descendants through the ceremonial offerings. In return the ancestors help and protect their descendants so that they may prosper.

Soon after death the *mo* or priest three times calls on the soul of the dead to return or arise, and when it does not do so he performs a ceremony to open the way of the soul of the deceased to Hades, or to paradise, which is called the ancient level land of Ntzī, the supreme but not the only god. The priest kills a rooster, and the soul of the rooster leads the soul of the dead person to paradise.

Some time after the *mo* has opened the way for the soul of the deceased to go to paradise, there is a procession. In front is a man whirling a stick. He is followed by two men playing the *liu sheng* and dancing, then two blowing water-buffalo horns, two carrying green bamboo twigs, and finally two men with guns. Inside the house a ceremonial drum is beaten. This ceremony is symbolic of the fact that in ancient times their ancestors lived in the forest where there were dangerous wild animals.

During the funeral ceremonies a bull or a male water buffalo is killed and partly cooked, and some or all of it is offered to the ancestors. Then the meat is thoroughly cooked and there is a feast. Friends and relatives enjoy the feast, but the descendants of the deceased do not then eat any of the meat.

Generally on the next night after the bull is killed a dance is performed by the strongest young men inside the house. It takes place in front of the ceremonial

[7 cont.]

844 4) Childbirth. The Miao-I people are physically very sturdy: their ability to procreate and their capacity for farm work are both great. The women too have to attend to house chores, being especially strong and fit, they regard childbirth as a common occurrence. When a married woman is pregnant [843] she has to be confined in her husband's house. At the time of childbirth she is attended by her mother-in-law or sister-in-law or sometimes she is just by herself. The umbilical cord is broken by means of a piece of stone, and the sac is placed in an earthen jar and buried underground or hung up high in the room. The baby is then washed with cold water. The mother 846 remains at home for a week, after which she goes up the hill to gather firewood or down the field to cultivate the land without further inhibition or recuperation. They are afraid to have 847 too many children and often get rid of them by drowning or simply killing them. It is said that when children are numerous there will be disputes over inheritance and litigations. [8] Moreover, if the parents have no property, the acquisition of many children means so much hard work to bring them up. So whether there is money or not in the family, to have children means added suffering and privation to the parents, who are therefore reluctant to have too many. Because of the prevalence ● [165] of infanticide the rate of childbirth is decreasing. This and the high mortality rate combine to endanger the growth of their population.

164 5) Disease. Due to the difficulties of livelihood the Miao-I cannot afford the facilities of health and sanitation. Their hardihood enables them to survive the cold seasons of winter and spring when little disease prevails. But summer and autumn are the seasons of ill health. In case of sickness there are no medical facilities in the Miao-I areas, and the patient is left to the mercy of nature or magic. Sometimes a mi-la [diviner] 755 or a kuei-shih [shaman priest] is asked to propitiate the ghost. Mi-la is also known as "mi-p'o," and kuei-shih as "tuan-kung." The patient's family first asks the diviner to ascertain the kind of evil spirit that is causing the trouble and the kind of animal most appropriate for sacrifice. Then the wizard priest is asked

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM 1 Indochina
Miao AE 5
Laotians AM 8

boy's pockets lay strewn about; the lengths of string, the broken penknives, the buttons, the mirror glass, the tins, the bottles and the burned out lamp bulbs. Here was accumulated the jackdaw harvesting, the valuable glittering rubbish which was all a Meo wanted of civilization, and which he was free to take, while leaving the civilization itself severely alone. What foolish, generous people, these town-dwellers were!

Our host's wife, a child of fifteen, was lying with her baby on a heap of rags in the corner. The baby was sick, he said, but the only thing necessary was to keep it away from the light – and air – as much as possible. Most Meo babies die in their first two years, and one wonders what would have happened by now to the fertile land of Indo-China, if they didn't.

There was a gun in the corner – a muzzle-loader of the kind it takes a Meo two years to make. They are copied from the guns first supplied by the Jesuits to the Chinese, but are turned out by an endlessly laborious process involving boring out a solid bar by twirling a white hot iron in it. It was enormously long, like an old-fashioned Arab stove-pipe gun, and when Dupont took notice of it the Meo offered to show it to him in use. We went outside and he loaded it with powder and shot he made himself. This process took about five minutes. Before pressing the trigger he warned us to stand well away because of the muzzle blast. The target was a small banana-leaf, skewered against a bank at twenty paces. There was a tremendous bang when he fired, but the leaf remained intact. He blamed this on the maize-spirit which we had just drunk, and was quite delighted when Dupont, giving a demonstration with his American light carbine, also missed.

There were no dogs at all at this village. They were all down at the poppy fields with their owners, the Meo said.

Luang Prabang lies at the end of a long, curling descent from the mountains and through smoking bamboo groves, on the banks of the Mékong. It is built into a tongue of land formed by the con-

[150 cont.]

101 White Meo ("Peu-Méo")
Black Meo ("Heu-Méo")
Red Meo ("Hong-Méo")
Meo of the flowers ("Hoa-Méo")
"Méo-moung-cha"

[151] These various tribes have characters, mores, and dialects only very slightly different. They are melting little by little [184] into one another and scarcely differ except in the details of feminine costume. Hence, we shall not study them separately, as we have done for the tribes of the preceding groups, and we shall restrict ourselves to pointing out in passing the peculiarities of each of them.

The "Méo" men are generally of medium or small stature, 142 robust, hardy, with strong legs, developed by the long climbs in the [147] mountains and the carrying of heavy burdens. Some "Méo" are of large stature, but these are not the toughest. The women are smaller than the men. Very sweet and graceful during their youth, they soon become very clumsy and heavy. Their breasts are extremely well [163] developed but deformed by their numerous progeny. The birth rate [165] is very high; the infant mortality, likewise.

The "Méo" have very coarse, very black hair. It is not rare [143] to find among them individuals who are blond or even albino, however.

273 The "Méo," very sober in normal times, seizes every opportunity to become drunk and to make good cheer. He often contracts [164] pulmonary diseases due to his heedlessness and to the bad conditions under which he lives.

147 It is impossible to acclimate him to low altitudes, where he immediately falls sick and rapidly becomes dispirited.

The "Méo" who have established irrigated rice fields have 24/ carried out this work along high mountain valleys. Yet they do not 36/ live near these planted areas, in spite of the relatively high altitude of the latter. As soon as the daily work is finished, they climb up again to their villages, which always remain located near the summits (see photo 428, Plate 43).

157 The "Méo" is of a gay disposition, very independent, courage- 609 ous, and extremely candid. Very hospitable, he always welcomes

163 Moreover, the birthrate among the Meo is one of the highest
165 of the high region and it is not rare to see six or seven children about each of their little houses. On the other hand, very high infant mortality operates to slow down the population's rate of increase. It is owing to the winter cold against which the Meo do not protect themselves by closing up their houses better and covering themselves more warmly. Be that as it may, we can foresee that in a more or less distant future, their tribes, no longer able to find nourishment in the mountains where they are settled, and driven along by new immigrations, will gradually come to overflow into the high valleys at less elevated altitudes, and will take the place of the Thai whose birthrate is very much lower.

Section 3

Dwellings

131 Sometimes Meo dwellings are found at the bottom of a cirque
342 situated on an elevated plateau, as at Dongvan, which is at a thousand
132 meters of altitude, but this is rather exceptional. In fact the Meo prefers to build his cabin on slopes with difficult approaches and near the summit of the mountains. The house usually is built on a small natural spur or platform cut into the side of the mountain, not far from a small ravine which provides him with water with the aid of a bamboo conduit. The roof is of straw or planks laid like tiles, the walls of pise or planks roughly joined, or yet of round logs placed one on the other, the doors wooden and fashioned with an axe. They almost never have windows. For light and air they rely on the interstices between the /133/planks or logs and on one of the gables whose upper triangle is open to every wind. In constucting his dwelling the Meo, who is still so industrious and thoughtful in his other tasks, shows himself to be most shortsighted. By building it with a little more care, and especially by stopping up both of its gables, he would keep away from his little family much of the bronchitis which comes each winter to threaten the lives of his loved ones. We have seen at 2,000 meters altitude and in zero temperature /centigrade/, little youngsters hugging the fire in a miserable wooden cabin with no other clothing than short cloth jackets. They stretched out their bare body and little hands to the flames, while shivering and coughing in a pitiful fashion, and the parents, accustomed to this spectacle, had no

39: Bernatzik--310 E-5 (1936-1937) 1947 AO1 Thailand
Miao AE5

/229/

Chapter 11

Medicine

515 [364] Hygienic conditions in the Meau villages are very unsatisfactory. The children in particular are literally encrusted with dirt. Even the adults seldom wash themselves. To do so they take some water in the hollow of the hand and put a little over the face or wipe the face with a damp piece of clothing. Since, however, articles of clothing, too, are rarely washed, this procedure is quite ineffective.

[296] Cleaning the body or clothing with anything but water is unknown; neither sand nor fat, oil, smoke, or fire is used. Marabail (1), too, states that the Meau are dirty and that their

1. Pages 463 and 451.

[312] clothing stinks, because they never wash. He accounts for this by saying that water is scarce, but this certainly is not true for Farther India!

People are sometimes covered with crusts of dirt into which perspiration cuts light streaks. Flies and other insects 364 hatch out their eggs in the rubbish heaps. The relatively good 164 health of the people stands in peculiar contrast to this. Child [165] mortality is very high, but it is offset by the high fertility. Anyone who in childhood was able to survive the many epidemics and sicknesses that befall the little ones shows considerable resistance to sickness as an adult.

364 The houses of the Meau are swept, to be sure, but the [356] refuse is thrown beside the dwelling. Pigs and dogs search for [514] their food in the rubbish heaps. /230/ There are no toilets (see [231] the chapter, "Settlement and House Construction"). The feces of the animals defile the dwellings and village squares and, during the dry season, often form a whole layer which is washed away only by the downpours of the rainy season. Since the Meau [361] villages are built on slopes, the violent showers take care of this needed cleaning very thoroughly. After tropical thunderstorms masses of water stream between the houses, which are protected by ditches, and wash away all the refuse.

AKha A04
Miao AE5

/230 cont./

A 515 Conditions among the Akha are somewhat more favorable, but likewise leave much to be desired. The personal cleanliness of the Akha, however, is unconditionally greater than that of the Meau. The people wash themselves regularly as soon as they A [356] are grown up; children are washed daily. The houses are always [296] swept clean, and the Akha seem to wash their clothing /231/ [364] more often than the Meau do. Otherwise what was found among the Meau applies. To be sure, hygienic conditions are somewhat 165 better, but they are still so deficient that a high mortality among [163] the children as a result of epidemics and sicknesses is unavoidable. Among the Akha, too, however, this mortality rate is offset by great fertility, so that the Akha, too, will certainly not be subject to a population decline.

A M 164 Prophylactic measures against illness are completely unknown to both the Meau and Akha, as is the nature of infectious diseases. ● 165 Although I did not succeed in determining precisely the losses [751] caused by epidemics, the consequences of such pestilences were [753] easily ascertained. Merely the presence of sibless Meau, who had placed themselves as unfree under the protection of powerful large /extended/ families, showed this, as did the many widows, widowers, childless parents, and orphans. Whenever I inquired M about the causes of death, it was said: "Died because of the 761 vengeance of evil spirits." It often turned out, however, that 164 these evil spirits had killed dozens of people at the same time. 731 I learned that once the Meau built a village in a country at an altitude lower than is customary and infested with malaria. When subsequently a malaria epidemic broke out they believed that they had chosen as a dwelling site a place haunted by evil spirits and they moved their village.

A 164 731 I could not find any moving of a village because of the outbreak of an epidemic among the Akha. Southwest of the Doy Tung there was an Akha village whose inhabitants had almost all fallen victim to an epidemic; from the description it was probably cholera. The survivors, however, had not moved the village.

/352 cont./

226 [278] ashes into the mass, and pour it all into the inlet of the pools. It takes only a few minutes for the stupefied fish to come to the surface. In a short time, the stream is "cleared" of fish, but not only at this spot, for the poison flowing downstream kills for miles farther on primarily the young fish, for which even the diluted poison is still fatal, though it is no longer dangerous for the larger fish.

[227] Fishing is also done with hooks without barbs and with small hand-nets (see the chapter, "Handicrafts," Fig. 347), as well as with simple weirs (Fig. 266). The latter are 60 [285] centimeters high and /Fig. 266 appears here/ plaited loosely out of bamboo strips five millimeters wide, so that only larger fish and crabs are caught. The weirs are put in the brooks. This kind of fishing, in contrast to the fishing methods described, plays only a minor role, although the [857] young lads in particular like to practice it. In addition, the Meau are masters at catching fish with their hands. They cautiously probe the hiding places of the fish under the stones and roots and, with lightning speed, seize the animals by their gills as they calmly remain in their hiding places. At [165] [136] this sport, however, many Meau have fallen victim to poisonous water-snakes.

[221] The time for fishing is after the harvest in the dry season. Then the streams have reached their lowest water level, and a narrow channel connects the deep pools where the fish seek safety. Then every fishing method of the Meau, with the exception of angling with hooks, is productive. The latter, on the other hand, is practiced only at the time of rising water, when the clear water is made turbid by downpours.

[184] [227] Fishing baskets, dams, fences, fixed nets or drag nets, fishing spears, and /353/ fishing arrows for crossbows or bows are, like harpoons, unknown to the Meau in Thailand.

AKha A04
Miao AE5

/438 cont./

A 462 [342] [313] [252] The division of men's and women's work is quite similar among the Akha, who are not inferior to the Meau in industriousness. Among them, however, housebuilding is exclusively a task for the men, whereas the preparation of firewood, for which large trunks must often be chopped up, is one of the tasks reserved for the women. Cooking and the hulling of rice in the mortar are, to be sure, tasks of the Akha women, but the men very commonly help them.

A 461 857 No differently than among the Meau, there are scarcely any tasks for the Akha children that are to be performed exclusively by them; the situation in this respect is the same as among the Meau.

/439/

Chapter 27

Anthropology

M ● 165 When one considers the poor hygienic conditions in association with the hardest physical labor (see the chapter, "Medicine"), it is truly astonishing that one comes across relatively many old people among the Meau. Also, I cannot agree M 145 [114] with Marabail (1) who in his work advocates the view that the

1. Page 463.

Meau grow old prematurely. On the contrary, I often marveled M [841] that the women, in spite of their work load, which was too hard for them physically, and even though no notice was taken with regard to the menstruation periods, actually do not lose their bloom any earlier than among our own people and in any case much less rapidly than among the southern Europeans.

A M 141 The Akha as well as the Meau are definitely small in stature. From the 20 women and men measured, the average heights amounted to:

AKha AO4
Miao AE5

/458 cont./

A M 161 Thus, in recapitulation, it can be said that the number of the Akha and Meau living today, as well as the actual demographic movement, lie completely in obscurity. The Akha, too, may represent a considerable contingent of population, but it can hardly be assumed that it is a matter of anywhere near as mighty a bulk of population as the Meau. From my own observations I can say that in the case of both tribes it is a matter of thoroughly healthy people. As a consequence A M [163] [165] of the average number of children, from eight to twelve among the Akha and seven among the Meau, a strong increase of the population is to be presumed, in spite of high infant mortality, wherever there are no limiting factors, such as sickness (see the chapter, "Medicine"), crop failure, warlike events, or special laws of the political rulers of the country, which, of course, decisively influence the natural increase. /Ills. 86-91 appear here on unnumbered pages./

/459/ Chapter 31

Talent, Knowledge, Character, Morality, and Manners

M 181 461 The Meau are a typical mountain people. They are by nature healthy, honest, sincere, not at all treacherous, and, a above all, industrious. This is necessary in order to master the hard daily work that is to be done year in and year out. One M [124] seldom sees adults sit around idly. Among the Meau, whenever I summoned my informants for linguistic studies, they provided themselves beforehand with the necessary material for at least making string or rope during our conversations. They then worked mechanically while I conversed with them. These M 181 157 conversations and my observations of their daily life gave me a good opportunity to discover that the burden of everyday life had not made them morose. On the contrary, they are cheerful, merry, and, at the same time, very conscientious.